

# THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

## “the first fruits of those who are asleep”

### Key question

How important is the resurrection of Jesus to the Christian faith and how strong is the evidence for it?

### Key text

## I Corinthians 15:20-24

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

### Key Definition

## Resurrection

Three days after His death and burial Jesus was physically raised from the dead unto a new visible life thus securing victory over sin and hope of eternal life for all who are united with Him by faith.

### A Fundamental of the Faith

## Bodily Resurrection

Christ was bodily raised from the dead.

### Introduction

1. “After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the MOST WICKED, VICIOUS, HEARTLESS HOAXES EVER FOISTED UPON THE MINDS OF MEN, OR IT IS THE MOST FANTASTIC FACT OF HISTORY.” Josh McDowell
2. Jesus has three basic credentials:

- a. The impact of His life on history.
  - b. Fulfilled prophesy in His life.
  - c. His resurrection.
3. "I have to admit that if the historian as such can come up with an adequate historical, (natural) explanation for the rise of the resurrection faith, my confidence in the integrity of the New Testament witness to the resurrection would be deeply undermined, if not completely shattered." Josh McDowell
  4. The Gospels do not explain the resurrection. The resurrection alone is what can explain the Gospels.
  5. The fact that Christians meet on Sunday is a testimony to the central significance of the resurrection.

A. **The resurrection is not a major theme in the Old Testament but it is mentioned.**

1. **Lk.24:25-27** - "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all Scriptures."
2. **I Cor.15:1-5** - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to . . ."
3. **Isa.26:19** - "But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the mourning; the earth will give birth to her dead."
4. **Job 19:25-27** - "After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God."
5. **Ps.49:15** - "God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself."
6. **Ps.16:9-10** - "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to see the pit."
7. **Hos.6:2** - "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him." This passage was used by Jewish rabbis to give proof of the final resurrection of God's people.
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9. **Dan.12:2** - "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

NOTE: Contemporary Judaism had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah. The notion of "a general resurrection of the dead" was a point of debate among Jews of Jesus' day.

## B. Christ predicted His own resurrection.

1. **Matt.16:21** - “From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.”
2. Look also at: Matt.12:38-40, 17:9,22,23, 20:18,19, 26:32, 27:63; Mk.8:31-9:1, 9:10,31, 14:28,58, 10:32; Lk.9:22-27; Jn.2:19-22, 12:34, ch.14-16

## C. Many have tried to explain away the resurrection.

1. There are four assumptions made by those who deny the authenticity of the resurrection:
    - a. **It is impossible.** The dead are not raised. Historical Critical Methodology is tied to “probabilities” and this in effect excludes the possibility of the miraculous. But this assumption, in its faith in science (alone), fails to realize that science without faith cannot address the most important questions of life and death—the origin on the universe and human life, how did we acquire self consciousness, why are we here, where are we going, why am I sensitive to the immaterial (beauty, injustice, God). While science has no explanation for much of life and therefore can not, with certainty, exclude the miraculous.
    - b. **The witnesses are biased.** The New Testament witness is not completely reliable in that only those with a faith bias give us the evidence. Take this quote for an example.  
 “The best way to discredit a witness in court is for the cross examiner to tie him up in knots and make his evidence appear to be such a issue of inconsistencies that the jury becomes convinced he is untrustworthy. One does not need to be a scientific New Testament scholar to do that with the resurrection narratives” (R.H. Fuller, The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives).

But the witness do not bear the marks of bias or distortion. Their faith did not precede the evidence but followed it. Their testimony bore the test of authenticity with their claim of many living witnesses (I Cor.15:6).
  - c. **It was the creation of the early church.** Something happened to launch the church that was “believed to be” the resurrection of Jesus. That something was a strong will to believe and to create a narrative that made sense of that faith. But when Paul wrote his first letters (20 years after the resurrection) he gives no indication that the resurrection was in doubt. This would not be enough time for such a doctrine to evolve.
  - d. **It does not matter.** Christian faith is based upon one’s subjective feelings, and Jesus’ ethical teaching. But such a view of Christianity (emotion + ethic) is hardly orthodox.
2. **OBJECTIVE HYPOTHESIS** - What the witnesses saw was real but their interpretation of its significance was misguided.
  - a. **The Swoon Theory** – Islam teaches that Jesus didn’t really die on the cross but just looked to be dead. Later He was revived in the damp tomb and later traveled to Kashmir, India where he died. Schonfield’s The Passover Plot appeals to this theory. But:
    1. The soldiers, Joseph, and Nicodemus witnessed His death.
    2. Jesus’ disciples did not perceive Him as having merely revived from a swoon.
    3. How could He have escaped the grave clothes?
    4. How could He have moved the stone?

5. How could He have walked to Emmaus (7 miles)?
  6. If He swooned, why did He not tell His disciples?
  7. How and when did He die?
- b. **The Theft Theory** - Some JEWS believe that Jesus' body was stolen. But:
1. This view was mentioned in Matthew 28:11-15.
  2. Why would the Jewish or Roman authorities have wanted to remove the body? To produce the body would have ended Christianity, a desire of both Jew and Roman alike.
  3. Why would the disciples have wanted to remove the body? They were depressed and disillusioned with Jesus at this time.
  4. How could the disciples have done it even if they wanted to?
    - a. The guard's testimony was not doubted (Matt.28:11).
    - b. The tomb was secured against theft (especially insurmountable to the disciples).
    - c. If the soldiers were sleeping, how could they say the disciples stole the body?
    - d. For soldiers to fall asleep while on watch would have meant death for them.
    - e. If they were asleep, the moving of the stone would have aroused them.
    - f. The condition of the grave clothes makes theft unlikely.
    - g. The disciples were men of honor. It is unlikely that they would fabricate a lie.
    - h. The disciples would hardly sacrifice their own lives for what they knew was a hoax.
- c. **The Wrong Tomb Theory** - The women and others went to the wrong tomb. But:
1. The women had noted where the body was left just 72 hours before (Mk.15:47; Lk.23).
  2. Could Peter and John have made the same mistake (Jn.20:2-8)?
  3. Was the "angel" a fabricated story?
  4. Why didn't the Sanhedrin go to the right tomb and expose the body so as to kill the Christian movement?
  5. Certainly Joseph of Arimathea would have known where the tomb was and the mistake would have been corrected.
3. **SUBJECTIVE HYPOTHESIS** - What the witnesses saw was not real in a space/time sense but rather a "faith encounter" or vision.
- a. **The Hallucination Theory** – (This is probably the most popular critical theory today) No one actually saw a resurrected Jesus; they just thought they saw Him. They hallucinated. This view is put forth by Bultmann, Lake, and more recently by Bart Ehrman. But:
1. Christ's appearances were very important as a part of the authority of the apostolic community. This would have been very controversial if the sightings were not a part of space/time reality.
  2. It is hard to believe that the Christian movement could have been sustained by a few hallucinations.

3. The many and varied people involved could hardly have experienced such similar visions.
  4. The extended and varied descriptions in the gospel record do not appear to be visions.
  5. Many of the witnesses recognized Christ only after a period of reflection suggesting there was no sense of “wish fulfillment” (John 20:2-8).
  6. Hallucinations usually are patterned in a life but there is no evidence of such patterns in the disciples’ lives.
  7. If this was the experience of Peter or Paul, the category that would have suggested itself would not be “resurrection”; it would be that of the appearance of Jesus’ angel or his spirit.
- b. **The Hypnosis Theory** - Jesus used prehypnotic suggestion to get the disciples to believe His resurrection at a point in time after His death.
- You’ve got to be kidding!
- c. **The Pagan Mythology Theory** - The early church adopted themes from pagan mythology in propagating the story of Jesus’ resurrection. But:
1. The pagan myths made no attempt to be historical as do the gospels.
  2. The pagan myths were tied closely to the cycles of nature while the gospel story is not.
  3. The pagan myths were not reported in the matter-of-fact style of the gospels.
  4. The resurrection accounts appear immediately in the early church, without the lengthy interim required for evolution of detailed mythology.
  5. In I Cor.15:6, Paul indicates that 500 people who saw the resurrected Jesus were still alive and could have been asked about their experience. This claim is audacious if the whole story was the result of mythological development.
- d. **The Rise of Faith Theory** - The early church believed in the word of preaching concerning the resurrection not the resurrection as history. The Easter faith produced the Easter fact. But:
1. This requires that we ignore the gospel stories or discredit them as propaganda. They do not come across as propaganda documents in that they present a negative view of the disciples and weak support for Paul’s emphasis.
  2. The fact that Paul’s letters (which are the earliest records we have of the Christian faith) assume a physical resurrection is hard to explain if the resurrection was the gradual invention of a faith community.
  3. **Luke 16:30-31** “If someone from the dead goes to them” – those who find their righteousness in the law – “they will repent.” Abraham answered: “if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead”
- Acts 17:32** “When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered”
4. This is the view of most historical critiques.

**D. The evidence for the resurrection is impressive.**

## 1. THE PRE-RESURRECTION SCENE:

- a. Jesus was dead.
- b. His tomb was identified.
- c. The preparations for burial were detailed and witnessed.
- d. The tomb was guarded (Matt.27:62-66).
- e. The tomb was sealed (Matt.27:66).
- f. The disciples were dispersed in disbelief (Matt.26:56).

## 2. THE POST-RESURRECTION SCENE:

- a. The empty tomb.
- b. The grave clothes.
- c. The position of the stone.
- d. The Roman guard.
- e. The post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to specific individuals and groups.
  1. Mary Magdalene (Jn.20:14, Mk.16:9)
  2. The women returning from the tomb (Matt.28:9-10)
  3. Peter, later in the day (Lk.24:34, I Cor.15:5)
  4. Emmaus disciples (Lk.24:13-33)
  5. The apostles without Thomas (Lk.24:36-43, Jn.20:19-24)
  6. The apostles with Thomas (Jn.20:26-29)
  7. The seven by the Lake of Tiberias (Jn.21:1-23)
  8. Over 500 on a Galilean mountain (I Cor.15:6)
  9. James (I Cor.15:7)
  10. The eleven (Matt.28:16-20, Mk.16:14-20, Lk.24:33-52, Acts 1:3-12)
  11. Paul (Acts 9:3-6, I Cor.15:8)
  12. Stephen (Acts 7:55)
  13. Paul in the temple (Acts 22:17-21, 23:11)
  14. John (Rev.1:10-19)
- f. The enemies of Christ did not refute the resurrection. It is significant that the resurrection was proclaimed in Jerusalem, near where He had been buried. If it could have easily been refuted, it most certainly would have been.
- g. The transformed lives of the disciples.
- h. The fact that the disciples died for their faith.
- i. The institution of the Christian church.
- j. Sunday worship.
- k. Christian ordinances.
  1. The transformed lives of 1900 years of history.

- m. The fact that the tomb was not venerated as was the custom with saints that died and did not rise from the grave.
  - n. It was customary to return to the tomb and collect the bones of famous people. There is no indication that this was attempted in the case of Jesus.
3. THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE: “The historical problem is to attempt to explain how it was that the early church came to make a claim that only made sense in the Jewish world, yet was not precisely what they as Jews had expected; how they came to describe Jesus in a certain way as the basis of their life and work, yet not in the way he was made known to them in their own day-to-day experience.” NT Wright The following points are summarized from Wright’s book *The Challenge of Jesus* chapter 6
- a. The early church grew up as a “**Kingdom of God**” movement. For Jews this had a meaning that demanded changes that were more than existential and personal. They were satisfied that something like the OT expectation of a changed physical world had begun. The resurrection of Jesus fits this expectation.
  - b. The early church grew up as a “**Resurrection**” movement. The word resurrection was only used (by Jews) to describe reemodiment, not the state of disembodied bliss.
  - c. The early church grew up as a “**Messianic**” movement. As such it was based on the firm belief that the Messiah was alive and victorious over his foes and theirs. If Jesus died and remained in the grave the movement would have ended as other messianic movements did at the death of their Messiah.
  - d. Paul, writing in the early 50’s and claiming to represent what the whole main stream of the church believed, insisted on certain things about the resurrection of Jesus.
    - 1. It was the fulfillment of the ancient promises of God to Israel to save them from their sins.
    - 2. It involved the transformation of Jesus’ body.
    - 3. It involved Jesus’ being seen alive in a very limited early period.
    - 4. It was the prototype for the resurrection of all God’s people.
    - 5. It was thus the ground not only for the future hope of Christians but for their present work.
- E. **The gospel accounts can be harmonized** (George E. Ladd, [I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus](#)) Note: One of the common criticisms of the historicity of the gospels is that they have differing and irreconcilable accounts of the resurrection.
- 1. The earthquake and removal of stone occurs before dawn.
  - 2. A group of four women come early to the tomb, wondering who will move the stone. As they approach, they are amazed to see that the stone has been rolled away.
  - 3. Mary rushes off to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus has been stolen (Jn.20:2).
  - 4. The other women stay in the garden. They enter the tomb and are met by two angels, who tell them to carry word of the resurrection to the disciples. The problem of “a young man” of Mark 16:5, “two men” of Lk.24:4, “angels” of Lk.24:23, is one of the “ordinary” synoptic divergences of detail.

5. The women rush away from the garden, filled with mingled emotions of fear and joy, speaking to no one about the vision of the angels at the empty tomb (Mk. 16:8).
6. Later in the day, Jesus met them (Matt.28:9 does not say that this meeting occurred in the garden). They had run away from the tomb. Jesus tells them to bear the word to the disciples; they depart to find the disciples, who are not together but scattered (Matt.26:56).
7. Peter and John, having been informed by Mary, come to the tomb after the women have left. They see the clothes; vague comprehension dawns on John. They rush off to gather the disciples.
8. Mary returns to the tomb after Peter and John have left; they had run to the tomb (Jn. 20:4), leaving Mary behind. She still thinks the body had been stolen. She is weeping outside the tomb, knowing nothing of the experience of the women she had left in the garden. She sees the two angels, then Jesus (John 20:11-17). (Mk.16:9 is not authentic.)
9. After the first shock of amazement had worn off, the women find some of the disciples; the disciples cannot believe the fanciful story (Lk.24:11).
10. The disciples have gathered together.
11. Mary arrives and tells her experience (Jn.20:18).
12. That afternoon, the walk to Emmaus.
13. Sometime that afternoon, an appearance to Peter (Lk.24:34). Paul does not mention the appearance to the women (I Cor.15:5-6) but neither does he preclude it.
14. That evening, the disciples are all together in the closed room. They had been scattered, but the testimony of the women, of Peter and John, then of Mary serves to bring them all together. Thomas was absent.
15. A second appearance to the eleven, including Thomas.
16. Galilee (Matt.28:16). The appearance by Tiberias (Jn.21) and to the 500 brethren (I Cor.15:6).
17. Return to Jerusalem; the final appearance and ascension.

NOTE: The diversity in the Gospel accounts shows their independence of each other and suggests that the points on which they do give identical reports are likely to be all the more historically reliable. Faith did not create the appearances. The appearances created faith.

**F. The resurrection of Christ has great theological significance.**

1. **Acts 2:24** - "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."

The resurrection was a sign of Christ's unique nature.

2. **Acts 2:29-33** - "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and



having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

The resurrection was necessary to fulfill the Old Testament promises of an eternal kingdom and king.

3. **Eph.2:6** - “and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.”

The resurrection secured our position “in Christ.”

4. **Eph.1:18-23** - “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

The resurrection made God's power available to His church.

5. **Rom.1:4** - “who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,”  
The resurrection bore witness to Christ’s deity.

6. **Rom.4:25** - “He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was **raised** because of our justification.”

The resurrection assured us of the effectiveness of the atonement.

7. **I Cor.15:17** - “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

The resurrection gives us a hope in our struggle with sin.

8. **I Cor.15:20-24** - “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

The resurrection gives us assurance of eternal life.

#### G. **What does the resurrection mean for the church and the world?**

1. **It gives meaning to history.** The task of theology is to give meaning to history. The resurrection reveals the ultimate end of history.
  - a. The Apocalyptic Focus is upon the end of time because it is only there and then that the meaning of history is made clear.
  - b. Those who offer an existential interpretation of history (grounding it in the self of the present) miss the true power of the resurrection.

- c. The disciples and the Jewish community as a whole viewed resurrection as an end time event.
- 2. **It gives hope for eternal life.** It demonstrates that there is life after death making the call for self-sacrifice in this life meaningful.
- 3. **The atoning value of His death is confirmed.** The power of sin is death and the resurrection demonstrates that death has been conquered.
- 4. **The fear of death is broken.** The problem of pain and death is answered with the hope of a new heaven and earth, a new body, and the fullness of life without the sting of death.

#### H. **How has the resurrection been explained by some modern scholars?**

1. **David Hume's *Essay on Miracles* (1748)** was widely regarded as demonstrating the evidential impossibility of miracles.
  - a. For Hume, it was a matter of principle that no human testimony was adequate to establish the occurrence of a miracle, in the absence of a present-day analog.
  - b. Truth is something, which is discerned, not something, which is imposed.
2. **David Friedrich Strauss – The Resurrection as Myth**
  - a. Strauss located the origin of the belief in the resurrection at the purely subjective level.
  - b. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus is the outcome of an exaggerated “recollection of the personality of Jesus himself” based in the social conditioning and cultural outlook of the Gospel writers.
  - c. This “mythical” risen Christ of faith was a necessity if Jesus was to continue to maintain a Messianic identity.
  - d. The resurrection, traditionally seen as the basis of “Christian faith, was now viewed as its product.
3. **Rudolf Bultmann – The Resurrection as an Event in the Experience of the Disciples.**
  - a. The modern scientific and existential worldview renders the worldview of the New Testament as unintelligible.
  - b. The resurrection is something, which happened in the subjective experience of the disciples, not something, which took place in the public arena of history.
  - c. Christ was raised in the proclamation of faith (kerygma) by the early church, not in the garden tomb.
4. **Karl Barth – The Resurrection as an Historical Event beyond Critical Inquiry.**
  - a. Barth felt that Bultmann had not given enough respect to the Gospel writer's detailed accounts of the empty tomb.
  - b. Yet he refused to go so far as to suggest that the resurrection could be investigated and verified as a physical event.
  - c. He felt that the Apostles were not calling us to accept a well-attested historical report so much as a decision of faith.
5. **Wolfhard Pannenberg – The Resurrection as an Historical Event Open to Critical Inquiry.**

- a. Pannenberg felt that honest historical scholarship should not presuppositionally exclude the possibility of miracles. He believed that the resurrection was an historical event based on the credibility of the witnesses.
- b. History, in all its totality, can only be understood when it is viewed from its end-point.
- c. The end of history, which has yet to take place, has been disclosed in advance of the event in the person and work of the resurrected Christ.

### I. **A summary of the false theories of the Resurrection of Jesus**

Theory	Explanation	Refutation
<b>Passover Plot</b> Hugh Schonfield	Jesus planned to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of both suffering servant and ruling king through a mock death and resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea and a mysterious "young man" were co-conspirators. The plot went bad when the soldier speared Jesus, who later died. The "risen Lord" was the young man.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The guard posted at the tomb is ignored in Schonfield's theory.</li> <li>2. The basis of the theory is faulty. The resurrection myths on which Jesus supposedly based his plot were not evident until the fourth century A.D.</li> <li>3. Such a "resurrection" could not account for the dramatic change in the disciples.</li> <li>4. All but four biblical witnesses are not accounted for, especially the five hundred eyewitnesses whom Paul spoke of as still living.</li> <li>5. The whole plot of enduring crucifixion (and in doing so, alienating his national supporters) seems unlikely.</li> </ol>
<b>(Swoon)</b> 18th-cent. Rationalists	Jesus did not die on the cross; he fainted from exhaustion. The cold temperature and spices revived him.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Medical science has proved that Jesus could not have survived the scourging and crucifixion.</li> <li>2. Could this nearly dead Jesus make an impression as the risen Lord?</li> </ol>
<b>Body Stolen by the Disciples</b> Jews	The disciples stole the body while the guards were sleeping.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the guards were sleeping, how did they know that the disciples stole the body?</li> <li>2. Severe penalties, even death, would be the result of sleeping on duty. The highly disciplined guard would thus not have slept.</li> <li>3. There is no way that the disciples could possibly overcome the guard.</li> <li>4. It is preposterous to believe that the disciples died for a lie that they created.</li> </ol>
<b>Existential Resurrection</b> Rudolf Bultmann	A historical resurrection is not necessary. The Christ of faith need not be bound to the historical Jesus. Rather, Christ is raised in our hearts.	The early disciples were convinced by historical events. They claimed to base their faith on what they saw, not on an existential need nor an a priori faith (Luke 24:33-35; 1 Cor. 15:3-8).
	The body of Jesus was buried in a common pit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not all criminals were buried in a common pit.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Unknown Tomb</b> Charles A. Guignebert</p>	<p>grave unknown to his disciples. Therefore, the resurrection account arose out of the ignorance as to the whereabouts of the body.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The New Testament gives Joseph of Arimathea as a witness to the burial in a specific family tomb.</li> <li>3. The women saw the body being prepared for burial and knew the tomb's location.</li> <li>4. The Romans knew where the tomb was, for they stationed a guard there.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Wrong Tomb</b> Kirsopp Lake</p>	<p>The women came to the wrong tomb, for there were many similar tombs in Jerusalem. They found an open tomb and a young man who denied that this was Jesus' tomb. The frightened women mistakenly identified the man as an angel and fled.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The women did not come looking for an open tomb, but for a sealed one. They would surely bypass the open tomb if they were unsure of the exact location of the correct tomb.</li> <li>2. The man at the tomb not only said, "He is not here," but also "He is risen."</li> <li>3. The women had noted the tomb's location seventy-two hours earlier.</li> <li>4. The Jews, Romans, and Joseph of Arimathea knew the location of the tomb and could easily have identified it as proof against any resurrection.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Legend</b> Early Form Critics</p>	<p>The resurrection was a fabrication that evolved over a lengthy period to vindicate a leader long since dead.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recent historical criticism has shown that the resurrection stories are of mid-first-century origin.</li> <li>2. Paul, in 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55), speaks of the resurrection as a fact and points to five hundred eyewitnesses, many of whom were still alive for his readers to question.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Spiritual Resurrection</b> Gnostics</p>	<p>Jesus' spirit was resurrected though his body was dead.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This denies a Jewish understanding of resurrection (bodily not spiritually).</li> <li>2. Christ ate and was touched and handled.</li> <li>3. The Jews could have shown the occupied tomb to their fellow Jews to prove the resurrection false.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Hallucination</b> Agnostics</p>	<p>The disciples and followers of Jesus were so emotionally involved with Jesus' messianic expectation that their minds projected hallucinations of the risen Lord.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over five hundred different people, in different situations, with differing degrees of commitment to Jesus, with different understandings of Jesus' teachings all had hallucinations?</li> <li>2. Many appearances occurred to more than one person. Such simultaneous illusions are unlikely.</li> <li>3. The disciples were not expecting Christ's resurrection. They viewed his death as final.</li> <li>4. The Jews could have pointed to the occupied tomb to prove them false.</li> </ol>

Modified from Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine by H.Wayne House, Zondervan)